

PUBLIC RELATIONS IN ADMINISTRATION



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**V. K. SUKUMARAN NAYAR
V. U. K. NAMBISAN**

**COLLEGE BOOK HOUSE
Trivandrum-1**

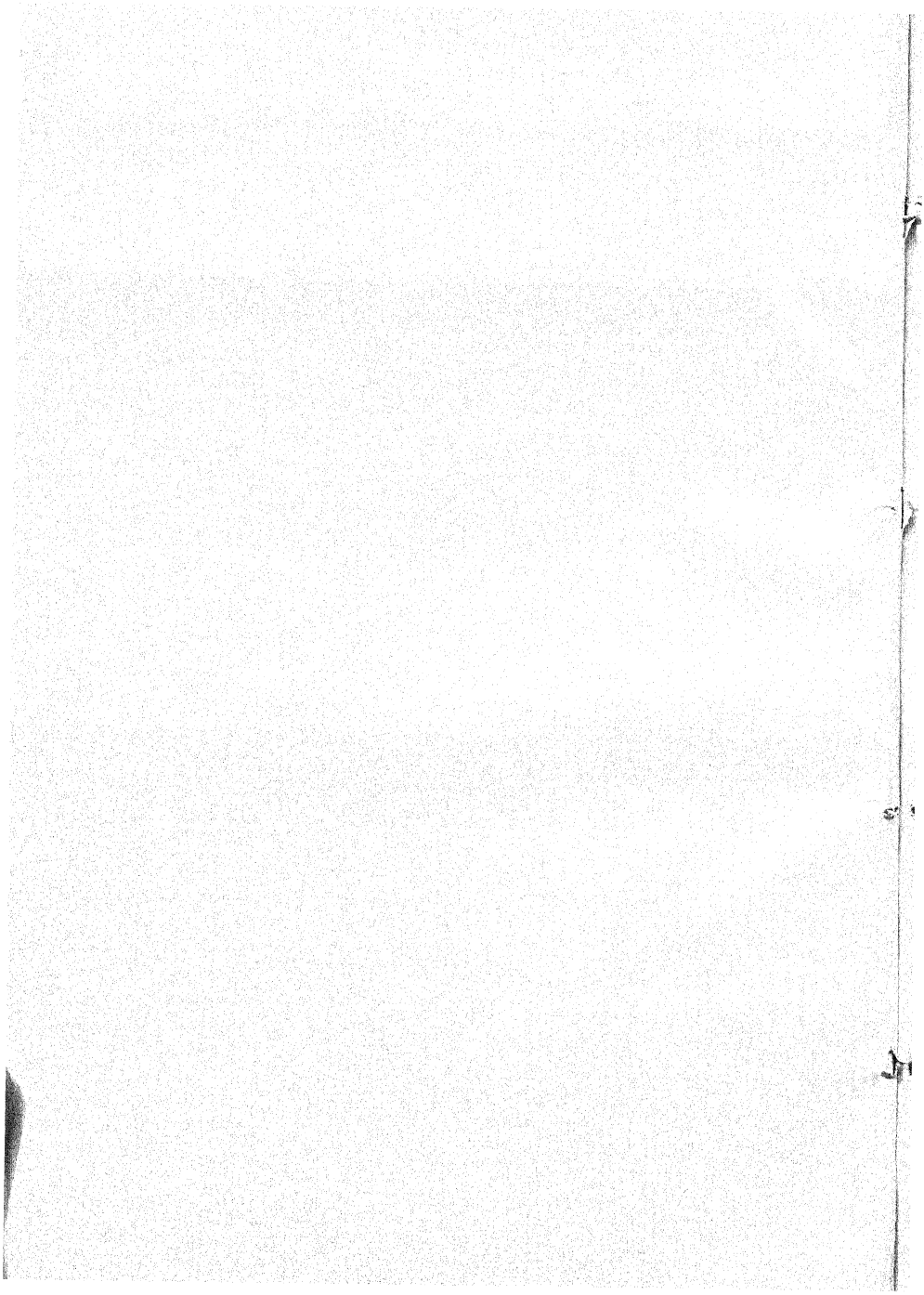
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FOREWORD

There has been, of late, an awareness of the need for a better understanding between the officers of Governments, at cutting edge level and the citizens. The Governments, both at the centre as well as in this State, have been considering what positive steps should be taken to educate the Government servants about the need for this understanding. The Regional branch of the IIPA Trivandrum therefore considered it appropriate, to undertake a study to ascertain the reaction of the public to the conduct of officials at the grass root levels. An empirical study was therefore undertaken on this topic and this publication is based on the data so collected.

The data required for our study has been collected through direct interviews with the officers and members of the public. However due to financial constraints, our study has been confined to a small area and within that area too a very small sample. Another limitation of the study has been the reluctance of the members of the public to testify in full against the officers. We are confident that the results can be taken as indicative of the general trend.

The data required for the study at village level was collected and analysed by Sarvashri P. M. Abdul Lathiff and R. C. Srikumar and for the subsequent phases of the study by Shri. Samson and Shri. Jayaprakash. The whole project was planned and directed by Dr. V. K. Sukumaran Nayar, now Vice-Chancellor, Kerala University. The Regional branch is grateful to them for their valuable services.

We hope that this publication will be found useful both by administrators and the public.

Trivandrum,
January '79.

G. Bhaskaran Nair
Chief Secretary to Govt.
& Chairman. Kerala
Regional Branch of IIPA.

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INTRODUCTION

Public relations has been defined as a planned and deliberate attempt to create understanding between an organisation and its public. According to another definition public relations is an organised effort to communicate information and to modify attitudes and behaviour on behalf of a client or cause. Modern administrative agencies have to deal with a large number of public ranging from their own employees to interest groups. However, all agencies do not make a conscious or systematic effort to promote public relations. In recent years there has been a growing awareness that governmental agencies should seek to promote an understanding with the people in a deliberate way. In colonial days the main functions of government were regulatory and legislative. Today governments discharge a variety of functions. The bureaucracy has an important role to play in initiating programmes for economic development and nation building. The contacts of the bureaucracy with the people have become more frequent and more intense. In a democratic system it is necessary for the bureaucracy to get public support. For this, effective public relations has become necessary. According to Eldersveld, the bureaucracy is a set of critical structures and processes serving as intermediaries between citizens and leaders, between the consumer producer and planners. In this dual capacity, administration is involved, in one sense, with the utilisation, management and allocation of human resources. However it will not succeed unless it modifies to public attitudes and beliefs and redirecets public and official behavior

This study is not concerned with any organised public relations activity in any large governmental organisation. The Kerala Regional Branch of the Indian Institute of Public Administration decided to study public relations in certain field offices at the taluk, sub taluk and village level. The public usually frequents in large numbers the taluk offices, the sub registrar's offices where documents are registered and the village offices where taxes are paid and local land records kept.

Citizens visit offices for various purposes and come from diverse educational backgrounds. Of the 107 respondents visiting village offices 21.88% were illiterate, 37.05% had primary education, 22.32% secondary schooling and 18.75 had college education. Of these 24.91% was satisfied with the behaviour of the village officials and 56.34% dissatisfied. The rest did not express any opinion. The most frequent complaint was about delay and 22.71% complained about delay. About 16% complained of the discourtesy meted out to them. Over 20% had complaints about corruption. There were also complaints of discrimination.

The people who visited the sub registrar's office came from the class with some land as most of them wanted to register documents. Of the persons interviewed 26.78% were illiterate, 33.03% had primary schooling, 18.66% secondary schooling, 12.04% had some college education and 9.19% were graduates of Universities. While 32.19% were satisfied with the behaviour of the officials, 49.03% were dissatisfied and 18.32% expressed no opinion. Only 25% complained of delay and 21% of discourtesy by the officials. 15 percent complained of corruption and ten percent of discrimination.

Of the 32 respondents who visited taluk offices 24.56% were illiterate, 32.44% had primary education, 22.37% secondary schooling 12.42% some college education and 8.21% University graduates. Of these persons 21.21% were satisfied, 58.17% dissatisfied and 20.21% expressed no opinion. Above 20% complained of delay, 18% of corruption, 14% of discriminations and 17% of discourtesy.

It seems that the maximum number of persons who were satisfied with the treatment received were in sub registrar's offices (32.95%). Of the people who visited taluk and village offices only less than 25% was satisfied. This may be due to the fact that the sub registrar's offices were set up for performing specific functions such as the registration of documents. Taluk and village offices performed a variety of functions and people had to approach them for a variety of reasons. The complaints mainly were of delay in getting things done, corruption, discourtesy and discrimination. Delay can be of two kinds procedural and intentional. In many offices there was procedural delay due to the complicated nature of established procedures.

Discourtesy shown to the public is a common complaint as well as discriminatory treatment. Allegations of corruption were made by 20% of the respondents in village offices, 15% in sub registrar's offices and 18% in taluk offices.

From an analysis of the answers it seems that some training in handling the public is necessary in field offices where more or less routine functions are being performed. It is also necessary that senior officers do periodical checking into question of delay. Cases of corruption can be covered only by effective vigilance work.

Public relations is an all inclusive term which covers not only the clientele of an organisation, but the employees also. It is therefore necessary to study the attitude of personnel in the offices covered by the study. Among the village officers interviewed the most important reasons for the bad public image of the officers were categorised as unreal expectations among the public and to the unpleasant duties the officers had to perform. Among other problems mentioned by them were over work, lack of facilities in the offices and the pressure of political and other influences. Most of them complained of poor salary scales and low rates of travelling allowances.

At the level of the sub registrar's offices the officers

complained that the public did not appreciate the procedural formalities in an office and were in a hurry to get things done. Twenty two percent of the officers complained about political and other personal pressures. The public was categorised as arrogant, quarrelsome, polite and humble by the officials. Most sub registrar's staff complained about inadequate office facilities, lack of chairs, etc.

The officials of the taluk offices complained about the lack of co-operation from the public as a main hindrance to effective public relations. Fortyfive percent of the officials mentioned this. However, 27% said that there was co-operation to some extent. About 46% complained about political and social pressure on their discharge of duties. As a contributory cause for low morale they mentioned poor salary scales.

To conclude, the officials expect a public that is co-operative. The Public expect officials to redress all their problems promptly without delay. Very often the public is unaware of the pressures under which officials work. while the officials expect a public which is 'co-operative'. They would like the public to be educated so that the problems of the officials could be understood by them. This difference in attitudes is normal. Good public relations require effective programmes for training Officers as well as better communication with the public.

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VILLAGE OFFICES

Village office is the basic unit of administration in the Revenue Department. The citizens have to approach the village offices for several purposes. To a common man its administration is a mini Govt. itself. So long as the present set up continues, the village office has a dominant role to play in the life of the citizens.

As a part of the survey, 107 persons were interviewed from 23 villages located both in urban and rural areas. The village officers of these villages were also interviewed. Opinions of illiterate as well as well-educated people were collected. Classification of individuals interviewed on the basis of education is given below:-

Illiterate	21.88%
Primary education	37.05%
S. S. L. C.	22.32%
Above S. S. L. C.	18.75%

These persons came to the village offices for various purposes like remitting tax, getting pattas etc. Following is the table which shows the nature of problems for which the individuals coming under the survey had visited the village offices.

PUBLIC AND THEIR PROBLEMS

Sl. No.	Nature of problems	No. of Problems	Solved	Not. Solved.
1.	Remitting Taxes	14	14	....
2.	Community Certificate	9	8	1
3.	Income Certificate	13	7	6
4.	Excess land porblem	4	....	4
5.	Financial Aid	22	15	7
6.	Poku varavu	4	1	3
7.	Valuation Certificate	7	2	5
8.	Land Assignment	8	2	6
9.	Ration Card	14	5	9
10.	Nationality Certificate	2	2	....
11.	Recovery Problem	6	4	2
12.	Legal Heir Certificate	2	....	2
13.	Identification	1	1	....
14.	Possession and enjoyment Certificate	1	....	1
Total		107	61	46

The table also indicates whether the persons interviewed went back from the village office with their problem solved or not solved. Solving a problem to some extent depend upon its nature. Village officers say that the citizens are not at all punctual in remitting the taxes and so it is with a sigh of relief that the village officers receive the remittance. Naturally the citizen returns from the village office with satisfaction. But the case of certificates like income certificate etc, an enquiry is to precede the issue of the certificates and an answer to this effect is itself apt to irritate the ordinary citizen. But this is nothing compared to the worry inherent in the delay in solving problems connected with ration cards, land assignment etc. since these things affect their basic necessities. Dissatisfaction, distrust and hostility towards the administrative system are the psychological reaction to this. Seeds of suspicion are being sowed in them. which grow in the decay of mutual co-operation between the citizen and the bureaucracy. We reap an envenomed public relations. But with a little tact and patience, it may be possible to ensure better public relations. This makes study of the behaviour pattern of the officials unavoidable.

BEHAVIOUR OF THE VILLAGE STAFF

Since public relations is very much connected with the behaviour of the officials, a study of the same was conducted. The people who were interviewed were asked to state whether they were satisfied with the behaviour of the village staff. The opinion expressed by the individuals regarding the behaviour of the village staff can be classified as given below:-

Satisfied	24. 91%
Unsatisfied	55. 34%
No opinion	18. 75%

Out of the 18.75% of the individuals who expressed no opinion regarding the behaviour of the village staff, a good number did so due to the fear that if they expressed any opinion, it may affect adversely the solving of their problems. Again it was found that almost all who answered the question positively had got their problems solved. The means that they adopted to influence the office staff was not at all a consideration for them. One point to be stressed is that we cannot blame the staff alone. The public has come to believe that they could get things done a bit earlier if they adopt corrupt practices. This leads to a conflict of interest between different individuals. Very often, financially well-to-do, politically influential and educationally forward may win. The weaker sections remain neglected.

The survey revealed that the citizens are put to a lot of botherations and inconvenience in the process of obtaining things done from the village offices. The public blamed the behaviour of the officials for this. The table below shows of the remarks of the unsatisfied public regarding the behaviour the village staff.

Type of Behaviour	Percentage
1. Unnecessary Delay	22.71
2. Discourtesy	16.32
3. Corrupt practices	20.13
4. Petty bureaucracy	9.03
5. Discriminatoin	12.46
6. Misconduct	6.65
7. Inefficiency	7.50
8. Others	5.20
Total	<u>100.00</u>

It will be noticed that the greatest complaint is about delay. The village people approach the village office with the

"earlier the better" and expect immediate help. But many of them - mostly from the poor and illiterate section - have to wait for days and days for getting things done. They do not know the procedure of work in the village office and hence they can only believe what the village staff say. If injustice is done to them they can only tolerate it. However the result of the delay is something undesirable - the deterioration of citizen-bureaucracy relationship.

Delays can be classified as procedural or intentional. For example income certificates, possession and enjoyment certificates etc. can be given only after an enquiry. To conduct enquiries the village staff have very often to go in person to the place concerned. When they are busy with more urgent items of work naturally the issue of such certificates may take some time and the delay can be justified. Some of the village officers mentioned that in normal course, a possession and enjoyment certificate can be issued in 2 days, income certificate in three days and a valuation certificate within 4 or 5 days. However it was found that in some cases the above certificates were issued on the day or even at the time the applications were presented presumably on corrupt practices being adopted by the applicants.

Apart from the delay caused by the administrative structure, there is intentional delay also. The survey proved that unnecessary delays are often caused in solving the problems of the people. The most important factor tempting to commit such delays was the desire for monetary gain. An impression is created that a particular officer is greedy and that only money will help to avoid delay. In such situations, citizens tend to give illegal money to the officers to accelerate the process of getting things done. A certain case which was studied for the purpose will illustrate the truth. Some people applied more than once to get their "Purampokku" land assigned. But no action was taken on the request just because of the reason that their applications were not "materially" supported. At the same time

some other persons who applied along with them got the land assigned mainly due to the currency they had distributed to the officers. The second factor contributing to intentional delays is the laziness of some of the officials. Some officers are found to be lazy and they will not allow any file to move or solve any problems. Generally such officers are not very helpful and the public also dislike to seek their help. Thus the extraordinary delay caused by them give much worry to the people. Yet another reason for intentional delays is the temperament of some officers who wish to have an orbit of people around them. This gives them a mental satisfaction and a feeling of greatness. Such persons expect the citizens to come to them and they do not take any action until the parties approach them. These sad-dists are a danger to the society and a challenge to the public relations in administration. Village officers show preferential treatment to persons of dignity, political influence and other dignitaries and also those who bribe the officers. This naturally results in delays in solving the problems of other common men.

Discourtesy

The administrators have every right to be firm in dealing with the public in official matters. However, overbearing or erratic behaviour which is exhibited by some of them at times is unpardonable. Fairness should not mean discourtesy or rudeness and with a little tact and patience it may be possible to ensure better public relations. Discourtesy is the most criticised part of the behaviour of the village officials. The discourtesy may be shown in the form of non-attention, unhelpful attitude or harsh words. With less educated public members harsh, even derisive phrases are often used. Since man is egoistic he does not like to be humbled down. People tolerate this discourtesy only because they feel that if they lodge a complaint, it will bring only further complications and difficulties. However the irritating nature and the arrogant words of officials make citizen-bureaucracy relationship unpleasant.

Among the persons who showed dissatisfaction in the behaviour of the village staff. 16.32% expressed that the chief defect in the behaviour of the staff was their discourtesy towards the public. Many of them believe that only influential people could get a good treatment from the officials. Rash answers like "You are causing disturbance here", "I cannot do it now, come on another day", "I am not the concerned officer", "It is not for you alone that this office functions" etc. make the people unpleasant. This breeds hostility among the people.

9.03% of the dissatisfied people consider discourtesy as a part of "petty bureaucracy". A good number of them said that, it was the elder officials who are more harsh, rude and arrogant towards the public than the younger officials. They expect respect and reverence from the ordinary villagers. But due to many changes in their social status the villagers are not extending the same kind of respectful behaviour as once they had done. This, the village officers consider as discourtesy on the part of the people and they return in the same coin. This may in turn sabotage the government's attempts to improve public relations in administration and bring the citizen more closer to the administration.

Corrupt practices

The behaviour of the village staff dissatisfied 20.13% of the people mainly due to their corrupt practices. Illegal benefits are granted to many due to the desire for material gains, favouritism etc. One of the persons interviewed from Pathanapuram Taluk frankly said that he had bribed the officials to get concessions in tax. An individual reported from one of the village offices at Mavelikkara Taluk, that he had distributed a good amount of money to the village staff to get a 'pattayam' of the land owned by him for the last seven years.

Similarly, in another village office in Pathanapuram taluk, a plot of land owned by the Ex-service men's Association was distributed to the landless people by casting lots. One who won the lot approached the village officer to get his land demarcated from the rest. As the village officer outstretched his hands to collect the 'pay' for it the fellow gave him Rs. 135/-. He was not satisfied but he was not prepared to give him his plot or return his money. Persons having similar grievances then submitted a petition to the District Collector, who after making adequate enquiry in the matter suspended the village officer and assigned each one his share of land. These are only a few examples of the illegal acts of the village officers. This shows that if persons like these were given power to handle the problems of the people, remedy will be worse than the disease. However, this is not a generalisation of all the village officers. This practice is very often found among the elder generation of officers. The young generation (village staff who are below 40) are an exception to this. In 16% of the village offices under survey the officers are below 40 and found less interested in accepting illegal money.

Discrimination

Since all are equal before the eyes of law, discrimination itself is illegal. Corrupt practices and discrimination are very much inter-connected. Discrimination starts with favouritism. Favouring educated, well-dressed and politically backed persons or those who bribe the officials result in loss of equal opportunity to poor, illiterate and uninfluential people to get their problems solved. The survey revealed that this is a very common phenomenon in the villages.

One case from a village office in Pathanapuram taluk is worth studying. Some applications sent to the Quilon District Collector to get pattayam were sent to the village officer from the taluk office for conducting enquiries and sending the report. The village officer instead of going

over to the concerned persons and places, invited them to the village office and conducted the enquiry sitting in the office itself. People gathered around the village office and waited upto the evening under the hot sun, hoping that they may be called to furnish the details. The most sympathetic fact was that like many other village offices this too was a place where facilities for the public were very much neglected. Enquiries by the people amidst this chaos and confusion brought only angry replies from the staff. The officer pulled out a long face and shouted back all the rash words he knew. At last in the evening many people had to go back with the answer that their applications had not reached the village officer; and those applications never came. Among the village staff, different persons had given different answers to their queries and this prompted these unfortunate persons to wait upto the evening. It was only with sighs that they could tell the story and conclude that only illegal money can do anything. Public relations cannot flourish in an atmosphere filled with suspicion.

Inefficiency and insincerity of the officials also brought forth severe criticism. For every mistake committed by the officials, the citizen has to suffer. He had to spend his money as well as time to get the mistake corrected. This creates a lot of uneasiness and this tempts the citizen to believe that no administrator is sincere and that there is confusion everywhere in the administrative system. It is true that, there is no procedure by which the citizen can be compensated for expenses and inconvenience arising on account of the neglect of the operating government servants. The interview with the people helped to bring to light many such cases.

In one such case, due to the mistake committed in writing down the details regarding the area under paddy cultivation, a person lost his 'ration' for many weeks and to get it corrected he had to shuttle between the village office and the supply Office. Due to this a very bad opinion about

the performance of the village staff was created in him. He said that these officials are irresponsible and only stern and forceful action can help them change their mood. To quote him, "their general attitude is to show an indifferent way of handling the papers reaching them which never helps the public. In all cases some sort of persuasion is needed to get the papers completed and/or to be made ready for onward transition to higher authority. There is no vast change in the co-operation extended to the public even after the proclamation of emergency".

Thus, after a systematic study of the opinions of the people, we got only a very gloomy picture of public relations at the village level.

The views of the village officers

Public relations, as many village officers stated, is a reciprocal relationship. Here the two sides are the 'Public' and the office staff. If one wing is dissatisfied with the other, they may raise unnecessary allegations. As far as the village office is concerned, it is the basic unit of administration. The public coming to the office may vary in nature and so also their problems. The village officers in the olden days were some sort of miniature kings. Those days are gone. However what the public feel about the village office is the same as they felt about it earlier. Now the village officer is only a medium between the public and the Government in all respects. The lay man who has no contact with other higher officials may create an opinion about them based on the performance of the village officer. Hence the village officer should be an ideal man. But unfortunately this is not the case.

The village officers were asked the question, "Public image of the village officer is very bad; what is your opinion"? The answers furnished by them give the following reasons of the same:-

Unreal expectation.

There are certain problems which cannot be solved immediately. "We cannot satisfy the public who approach us with complicated problems" said a village officer. Such problems which need enquiry may be delayed. The illiterate public mistake this as intentional delay on the part of the staff.

Unpleasant Duties.

The public who take loans from various departments like Revenue, Blocks, Corporations and Banks are very often found reluctant to repay the same in time. It is the poor village officer who should collect the money. "This bad image will exist so long as we approach the public on financial matters"—they said. Most of the village officers are dissatisfied with the existing system for recovery of money and they suggest that a new set up should be developed to collect such amounts.

Over work

Duties are delegated to the village office from the Taluk Office, supply office, Panchayat office etc. So the village officer is compelled to act according to the wishes of several senior officers. They have to assist these officials personally in dealing with affairs of each department. The work load is so heavy that they have no time to be in office to deal with those who come over to the village office. Except on important days like remittance day, they would be wandering about in the village on a number of problems. The number of staff is not enough to deal with the entire office work. Lack of adequate staff prevent them from satisfying many of the citizens who visit the office.

Lack of facilities in the office.

The Village Officers said that it would appear as though it is the duty of the village staff to furnish the office. Govt: have not supplied enough furniture to these offices. Hence

the public coming to the office cannot even be provided with a seat. This naturally creates an ill-feeling among the public that the village officer is not a man of manners. Similarly in the case of stationery also the Govt. have adopted a step-motherly attitude. Registers required for the office are not supplied regularly. The "Thandaperu Register" is an example. This has to be re-written once in five years but it was seen that the Registers given 16 years ago are still used. The total writing paper allotted in a year is 40 sheets only. The village officers therefore compel the public coming to the office to bring papers when they come to village offices. This may again create in the minds of the public a notion that the village officer is deliberately troubling them.

Political and other influences.

Among the village officers interviewed 20% accepted that political influence and influence of other dignitaries are very much at village level. "They are really a headache to the village officers", they said. They act as a stumbling block in solving the problems of the common man.

Loss of morale

The Village Officers themselves accepted the fact that they are losing their morale to work due to a number of problems. First and foremost comes the problems of their salary. They complained that their salary is not even enough to meet their travelling expenses. T. A. allotted to them is not sufficient. They demanded that T. A. allotted to them should be given along with their salary. Most of the village officers were frank enough to say that their laziness in doing work is due to the insufficient salary. Another factor is the lack of encouragement. 83% of the Village Officers were satisfied with the involvement of the Senior Officers but the rest complained about the autocratic nature of the senior officials. If the Village Officers do the work allotted to them in a good manner, the credit in many cases, goes only to the Superior Officer. "The

case with collecting taxes is the same, said a certain Village Officer. If the Village Officer could collect it in time, it would be the Tahsildar who received the good service certificate.

Dissatisfaction has engulfed both village bureaucracy and the public and the result is the absence of adequate public relations. Smooth functioning of administration necessitates the betterment of citizen-bureaucracy relationship. Something should be done to improve it at the village level.

Suggestions for the betterment of public relations

We have seen that the behaviour of the village officers in general is not satisfactory. It is necessary that a new pattern of behaviour should emerge among the village staff. Educated persons should be recruited as village officers and given adequate public relations orientation by suitable training programmes. They should be made capable of understanding the grievances of the people and solving them without unnecessary delay.

Major sources of dissatisfaction with the behaviour of the village staff are delay and corrupt practices. Procedural delays cannot be helped. But the people will not misunderstand the staff if the minimum time required for the issue of certificates etc. are worked out and exhibited in the village office. Then the public will know when they could expect their problems to be solved. This will also avoid the scope for corrupt practices. If it is notified that "Income-Certificate" will be available only after 2 days of application, the applicant will not be loitering about the Village office and trying to expedite the certificate by offering bribes to the staff. He will also understand that he is not being deliberately troubled by the village officers. In really urgent cases where a certificate is immediately required the Govt. can think of a system of affidavits. An applicant can wait for the normal notified delay or take the certificate immediately on furnishing an affidavit. Giving wrong

affidavits should be made a criminal offence. There should also be a machinery for verifying the truth of the affidavit expeditiously so that the crime is detected before the applicant could do much harm with the certificate received based on the affidavit. The question is, of course, to be examined in all legal and administrative angles.

In areas where there is no fear of check or surprise raids, officials tend to take their duties lightly. It would therefore be better to tighten the supervision over the lower staff; at the same time the machinery for redress of the grievances of citizens should be strengthened to make it more effective.

Progress of the people depends upon their participation in administration. So care should be taken to cause more citizen participation in administration. All the available communication channels should be used to impart knowledge to the public regarding village administration and there should be a planned and deliberate attempt to create understanding between the Government and the public.

Lastly the conditions of service of the village staff should be improved and their morale boosted up. A set of disgruntled village staff will never be able to present a good image of the Government. To a certain extent efficiency also depends on the working conditions. Care should therefore be taken to provide better facilities in the office both for doing their work and for receiving the visitors.

3

SUB REGISTRARS OFFICE

The study at sub-office level was undertaken in the offices of Sub Registrar of the Registration Dept: An attempt was made to find out:—

- (1) How many visitors came in contact with an official in a day.
- (2) The purpose for which the visitors come.
- (3) The attitude of the official towards the visitors.
- (4) Whether there is any need for a mediator to tackle the officials.
- (5) To what extent the officials are accessible to any one who wants to meet them.
- (6) Whether the visitors have to face any kind of delay—both intentional and unavoidable – etc.

We have also tried to find out the draw backs in the system by interviewing the officer and the office staff as well as the visitors.

To make it a scientific study of 'public-relations in administration in the Sub-Registrar's office level', we were forced to make a purposive sampling of the Sub-Registrars' offices in Kerala. Altogether 89 persons were interviewed

from 21 offices which constitute 20% of the visitors with the help of a questionnaire. Personal interviews with the officer and his staff were held and department's operation was observed. The persons whom we have interviewed include both literates and illiterates. Figures in this connection are given belows:-

Illiterate	26.78%
Primary	33.33%
Secondary	18.66%
Some College study	12.04%
Graduates	9.19%,

In most cases the visitors came into contact with the offices of the Sub-Registrar for presenting problems, ranging from registration of documents to registration of marriages.

A majority of the visitors had their problem solved on meeting the officers concerned. But at the same time we should not forget that the solving of problems to some extent depends upon the nature of the problems. It is observed that the office staff is competent in solving most of the problems while in some cases they are very slow. The obstacles observed are:

1. the stringent rules and regulations of the department.
2. third party interference in the registration of documents
3. the time consumed and complicated procedures in registering a document
4. the indifferent and aggressive attitude of the office staff and in some cases the ignorance of the public
5. the 'petty - bureaucracy' which is a curse of this department
6. the unnecessary influence from political parties as well as from the official superiors etc.....

The 'publics' are in most cases dissatisfied in getting their problems done. They alleged that they are facing unnecessary

delays. As one of the junior Superintendents pointed out "red tapism" is a part and parcel of this department. While 28 persons faced 2-3 hours of delay in getting their problems done, 12 persons faced two days of delay. As we have pointed out, one of the reasons for this delay is the stringent rules and regulations of the department. Usually a copy of a registered deed is given within '15' days from the date of registration. If one fails to receive the document within the prescribed time limit he has to pay a fine of 50 ps. per day. But in some cases he gets the copy of the deed only after this period and as per rules he is forced to pay the penalty. On the other side, a party can obtain the copy of his registered deed on the same day of registration if he is ready to pay a "double fee". This "double fee system" is a new development as far as this department is concerned. While this system enables a party to get their copy of deed on the same day of registration, this in some cases creates unnecessary burden to the office staff. 24% of the Sub-Registrars whom we have interviewed are of opinion that, on occasions, this system cannot function smoothly. One Sub-Registrar pointed out that "if a larger number of public apply for copy of deeds by remitting a double fee we would become helpless due to the scarcity of the office staff." As a solution for this his suggestion was the abolition of the "double fee system" and the vesting of more discretionary powers on the Sub-Registrars in these matters. However, we should not forget that this creates wide scope for corruption in the department. Another Sub-Registrar was more rationalist in this matter. To him the only solution to avoid these obstacles is to introduce a **"TRIPLE FEE SYSTEM"**.

The third party mediation in registering documents creates tensions in the relationship between the public and office staff. Now-a-days it has become an unwritten law in the Registration Department that no one can get their problems solved without contacting these mediators. These 'parasites' have enriched themselves by fleecing the parties and have become an 'unauthorised parallel bureaucracy' in the department. There seems to be a wide-spread belief that nothing can be got done in a Sub Registrar's Office unless one can manage to exercise some 'pull'

through these mediators, and that, the officers are likely to be influenced more by these 'parasites' than by the merit of the case. These parasites include 'Vendors', document writers, senior and junior, 'professional witnesses' etc. The sources of corruption in the Sub-Registrar Office can be traced directly to the 'parasites'. It is pointed out that this third party mediation can be avoided by supplying necessary stamps and document sheets through government machinery and appointing document writers by the government. 86% of the officers and the office staff are in favour of abolishing 'professional witnesses'.

Time consuming and complicated procedures in registering a document adds to the situation in this relation. The chart given below is a self illustration of the said statement,

CHART

Sub-Registrar

The necessary stamped written document
is handed over to the Sub-Registrar.
He puts the seniority number and his signature.
If the Sub-Registrar has special interest on the
document he puts his signature only.

Comparing clerk

The filing copy and the document are compared.
There is a general feeling that if 'two-three' is not
given to the proof reader, the document won't
be properly read.

Sub-Registrar (Registration Stage)

After giving the receipt for the fees, the
Sub-Registrar, with the permission of the
parties register the document.

Record Section

The document goes back to the Record Section and

the registered document alone
is sent back for being handed on to the parties.

Rules must, therefore, keep pace with the changing times and a more speedy system evolved for the registration of documents.

BEHAVIOUR ANALYSIS OF THE OFFICE STAFF

Since public relations is very much connected with the behaviour of the officials, a study of the same was conducted in this case also. An opinion survey was conducted to see whether the visitors were satisfied with the behaviour of the office staff. The analysed data is given below.

Satisfied		32.65%
Dissatisfied	<div> <div>..... Rude - 71.43%</div> <div>..... Hostile - 15.07%</div> <div>..... Indifferent - 13.50%</div> </div>	<div> <div>100%</div> <div>49.03%</div> </div>
No opinion		18.32%

A large number of visitors felt dissatisfied (49.03%) after their meeting with the officers concerned. This large percentage includes both literate as well as illiterate.

Forty-three (about 49.03%) visitors were not satisfied with the outcome of their visit. They become frustrated on the rash and indifferent behaviour of the officers. While Twentyfour (about 32.65%) of the visitors stated that they were satisfied with the behaviour of the officers, 18.32% of the visitors declined to answer the question probably due to a fear that it would lead to unnecessary delay on their problems,

**CLASSIFICATION OF REMARKS REGARDING THE UNSATISFACTORY BEHAVIOUR OF
THE SUB-REGISTRAR OFFICE STAFF.**

Type of behaviour	No. of persons	Percentage
1. Unnecessary delay	23	25. 86
2. Discourtesy	19	21. 35
3. Illegal Act	14	15. 61
4. Petty Bureaucracy	8	8. 98
5. Discrimination	10	11. 23
6. Misconduct	4	4. 50
7. Inefficiency	6	6. 85
8. No opinion	5	5. 62
Total	89	100. 00

PUBLIC & THEIR PROBLEMS

Sl. No.	Nature of Problem	No. of problem	Solved	Not solved
1.	Transfer of deeds	06	6	0
2.	'Ishtadanam' [gift]	05	5	0
3.	Mortgage deeds	17	11	6
4.	'Ozhimuri' [Release deed]	12	10	2
5.	'Vilayadharam' [Sale deed]	21	12	9
6.	Will deed (closed will) (open will)	02	2	0
7.	To take copy of documents	15	5	10
8.	Registration of Marriages	08	7	1
9.	Registration of Chitty	03	1	2
Total		89	59	30

Of all the problems having a bearing on the good relations between the officers and the public, the most significant and pernicious one seems to be delay. There is a complaint that delays very often avoidable, sometimes inordinate, invariably inexcusable – continue to occur in the disposal of applications and petitions of citizens. In several cases delays might not be due entirely to faulty or complicated rules or procedures: more often than not, they might be due to the deficiencies in character or apathy of the human element, including laxity or lack of supervision.

We have already indicated that the procedures adopted by the Department are complicated and that they result in delay. In some cases some enquiry is also essential before registering a document. To cite an example, it is a usual practice in the Sub-Registrar offices like Parassala and Vellarada, (which are situated on the border of Kerala-Tamil Nadu), where there is a continuous flow of document from Tamil Nadu for registration. On these cases the Sub-Registrar would find himself in a dilemma. As per rules he is bound to register the document. But in practice it is impossible. The Sub-Registrar should satisfy himself that the concerned party has landed property in Kerala. So before registering it an enquiry on the document is inevitable.

Undervaluation of property in documents also creates unnecessary delay. In some cases undervaluation of property leads to wide scope for corruption in this department. One of the visitors to a Sub-Registrar office narrated a heart-touching incident in which he himself was a party. According to him the document writers play a pivotal role in registering these undervalued documents.

Heavy work load is a reason which results in unintentional delay. A larger number of the Sub-Registrars (about 80%) are of opinion that scarcity of staff is a reason which leads to 'delay'.

During the survey some of the visitors alleged that they are facing unnecessary delay. When we have tried to analyse in

depth the reasons behind this allegation, we were able to find out some factors. These factors are desire for power and money and laziness. It is a paradox to say that some of the office staff are justifying the unnecessary delay in the department. According to them, as already mentioned, "Red-tapism becomes a part and parcel of this department and it is difficult to wipe away this peril." During the course of the study we have helplessly witnessed these kinds of unnecessary delay.

The survey also has focussed light on cases in which delay was due to the desire for monetary gain. There is a public belief that things will move only if bribes are paid. One of the visitors at a Sub-Registrar office told us that he had given bribe to the office staff through a document writer, to get his problem solved.

Discourtesy

Deliberate discourtesy to the public creates a bad impression about the officers. Rough and curt treatment, even to those citizen who either innocently or deliberately make a nuisance of themselves is unpardonable in a democratic society.

21. 35% of the persons argued that discourtesy is the main defect on the part of the office staff. It is a fact that a well dressed or educated man, as it usually happens, gets preference in getting a certain service from the department over a person who is less educated and less articulate. A similar preferential treatment is frequently allowed to acquaintances and politically articulate persons. Thus, there is a belief that only influential persons could get good treatment from the officials.

Rash and harsh answers like "go and enquire somewhere else", "You are making yourself a nuisance in this office", "This office is not meant for you alone", "I don't know", "If you have any complaint, inform the appropriate authority, I have no time now" etc. result in dissatisfaction among the people. It also leads to an unpleasant atmosphere in the relation between the public and the bureaucracy.

Conversely courteous behaviour, a word of sympathy or appreciation or encouragement, a sentence or two in explanation when a request cannot be granted – in short a human touch – is sure to start a chain of relations which will help immensely to bring the administrators and citizens nearer to each other.

However, the existing hitches between the citizen and administration in the Registration department needs to be bridged for making better public relations.

Among the persons interviewed 8.98% are of the opinion that 'petty bureaucracy' is a part of discourtesy. An air of conceit or arrogance, a show of irritation or misdemeanour, lack of proper response, false promise, or a tactless 'No', procrastinations and delays – in fact all that goes by the name of 'Petty bureaucracy' in the disfunctional sense of the word – may contribute to tarnish the image of administration in the eyes of citizens. The staff and officer expect obeisance from the public. However, both education and consequent awareness of their rights make the public to insist on their rights.

Discrimination

The Fundamental Rights in the Indian Constitution declares that all are equal before law. Thus, discrimination itself is an illegal act. But many of the Sub-Registrar offices in Kerala discriminate between citizens to citizens. We came across 11.32% of the discriminated persons who are dissatisfied with the proceedings of the office. This discrimination is backed by various factors. There is discrimination on social grounds, and both better educated and better dressed persons. Such treatment is also given to those who bribe the officers.

Illigal Acts

16.34% of the interviewed alleged that illegal benefits were granted to many due to the desire for illegal gains – both material and non-material. A good number of public grievances

is due to this factor. Such discriminatory dealings are prompted by several reasons like:-

- (1) in most cases for material gains
- (2) often influence from parties
- (3) in rare cases by pressure from the officials.

Among the persons interviewed, a few were frank enough to reveal the corruption which is going on in this department. One person was bold enough to say that he is not getting justice from the office staff due to the lack of influence (monetary). Yet another was against the whole system even though he had given bribe to get his problem solved. It is necessary to treat the public, both the better educated and less educated, with a sense of courtesy.

However this should not mean that all the Sub-Registrars and the office staff are the symbols of delay and corruption. The younger generation of officers, which constitute 32% of the staff were proud to say that "none can influence them". The public also had no complaint against such officers.

The rest of the aggrieved are the victims of inefficiency, insincerity and intra-departmental non cooperation. The roots of the trouble may lie in the individual human factor, or in the organisational structure or in the systems and procedures that guide its working.

It is necessary to point out that in Sub-Registrars' offices 62 % of the clerical staff who are handling the registration of documents are ignorant of the technical procedure and this leads to unnecessary delay.

Generally visitors have complaints about the physical inconveniences in the offices such as arrangements for sitting, provisions of drinking water, toilet rooms etc. When we tried to bring these inconveniences to the notice of the Sub-Registrars,

they sided with the public. One Sub-Registrar said that "even the chair on which I am sitting is supplied by a kind hearted man of the community".

On the basis of this survey the grievances against the Sub Registrars' offices may be summed up as follows.

- (1) Discourteous and unhelpful attitude on the part of the officials.
- (2) Inordinate delay in office proceedings.
- (3) Corruption among the officials.
- (4) Favouritism and nepotism in dealing with the general public.
- (5) Inefficient machinery in redressing the public grievances.
- (6) Delays caused by faulty procedures.
- (7) Delays caused by lack of co-ordination- both intra-departmental and interdepartmental.
- (8) Delays for non-material gains.

The views of the Sub-Registrar Office Staff regarding Public Relations

We have tried to ascertain the views of the staff and also noted down their complaints against the visitors. The general complaints are:

- (1) More public co-operation is essential for a smooth relationship.
- (2) The mass should be more educated to understand the problems of the officials.
- (3) In most cases the visitors are in a hurry to get their problems done.
- (4) External influence should be avoided.
- (5) The unreasonable transfer of officials.

Co-operation is a multisided activity. Indeed the entire body of citizens is the potential clientele for co-operation in administration. Though these officers are complaining about

the non-co-operation of the public they in most cases forget the maxim 'give respect and take respect'.

About 92% of the Sub-Registrars who were interviewed are of the opinion that the public should be educated. To them education in an educational institution could do nothing in this respect. Only mass media of communications could make the public more aware of the offices and their method of working.

The complaint that the public is in a hurry to get their problems done is true to a large extent. The problem is somewhat psychological. Every visitor in the Sub-Registrar's office wants to get their problem solved as early as possible, and forget the difficulties of the staff and the time required for satisfying the procedures.

Even though delays cannot be justified we cannot ignore the helplessness of the officers and their staff. Lack of adequate trained staff and office facilities is a reason for the delays. As one Sub-Registrar pointed out "if eight persons apply for their copy of deeds on the same day after remitting a double fee, it will not be possible for us to complete the work even though we are instructed to give the copy within the prescribed time limit".

It is their courtesy to offer a seat to a visitor. But as far as a Sub-registrar is concerned he himself is not in a position to sit on a good chair. In a Sub-Registrar's office the officer wanted to offer us good chairs. Unfortunately no chairs were available. However, he offered 'a stool' to one and a 'wooden box' to the other by removing the files placed on them.

Among the officers interviewed 22% accepted that political influence and influence from important personalities are very much at the Sub-Registrar office level. This leads to frustration and uneasiness among the officers.

In this context the nature of the character of the visitor is an important factor.

Thus, according to the staff, the meagre salary, lack of adequately trained staff and office facilities, unnecessary outside influences in their work etc. may create problems in the relations between the officers and the public.

OPINION OF OFFICIALS ABOUT THE PUBLIC

Nature of character	Percentage
Arrogant	12. 42
Quarrelsome	22. 37
Humble	8. 21
Polite	24. 56
Can't say	32. 44
Total	100

Suggestions for better public relations.

The entire staff of the office have to deal with the public and they have to build up the image of the department. They should be given adequate training in public relations. In the discharge of duties, they have to handle technical and complicated problems and so they should be given adequate training in the departmental procedures and the Acts and Rules administered by them.

Undue influence and pressures can be reduced only by fixing normal time limits for various activities in the department and notifying them on the notice board. Realistic time limits should be fixed and it should be made obligatory for the staff to abide by them. As an example, the receipt for fees paid for an application for an encumbrance certificate should indicate the date on which the certificate will be due for delivery. The party should get the certificate positively on this date and not earlier or later. Then the document writers and other intermediaries will not be influencing the staff for getting the certificates earlier. The public will also be happy and would not try to adopt corrupt practices if they are assured of the certificate on a particular date and have no chance of getting it earlier. It will also be worth while for the department to issue pamphlets periodically, explaining the working of the department so that the public may know the various activities of the department and the Rules and Procedures etc. and they may not have undue expectations from them.

The departmental procedures should be streamlined. Now even though the parties have to produce filing copies for registration, comparing takes its own time. Taking of photo-static copies of documents could be thought out. Better indexing of documents may reduce the delay in the issue of encumbrance certificates. A scientific study of the method of working and the procedures of the department with a view to simplify them should be undertaken by Government.

The morale of the staff should be boosted. Their work

load should be assessed scientifically and adequate staff provided. Better conditions of work like adequate furniture toilet facilities etc. both for the staff and the visitors should be provided by the department. An effective machinery should be set up for the staff to ventilate their grievances. The corrupt and the lazy should be punished and for this purpose supervision and control should be tightened. When these things are done, the staff will also do their best and public will have no complaints against them.

4

TALUK OFFICE

For a study at Taluk level, we selected the Taluk offices. We studied a total of 32 cases spread over three districts in Kerala namely, Trivandrum, Quilon and Alleppey. These cases were drawn from the selected Taluk offices in those districts. Personal interviews with the Tahsildar and his staff were held and the Department's operation was observed. Opinions of literates as well as illiterates were collected. The following table deals with the classification of individuals based on education.

Illiterate	24.56%
Primary	32.44%
Secondary	22.37%
Under graduate	12.42%
Graduate	8.21%

These people came into contact with the concerned Taluk offices for getting their problems solved. These problems range from obtaining Legal Heir Certificates to Income Certificates. The table gives the details.

The nature of the problem is a very important factor in getting it solved. It was found that the Tahsildar and staff were prompt in solving some of the problems while they were unpardonably slow in solving some other problems. The table is a self-illustration on this. While 59.38% of visitors faced delay in getting their problems solved 40.62% of visitors felt satisfied after visiting the officer concerned.

THE PUBLIC & THEIR PROBLEMS

Sl. No.	Nature of the Problems	No. of Problems	Solved	Not solved
1.	Community Certificate	5	5	....
2.	Income Certificate	2	1	1
3.	Excess land problems	1	....	1
4.	Financial Aid	6	2	4
5.	Valuation Certificate	3	1	2
6.	Land Assignment	2	....	2
7.	Nationality Certificate	1	1	....
8.	Solvent Certificate	5	2	3
9.	Recovery problem	1	....	1
10.	Legal Heir Certificate	2	....	2
11.	Identification	3	1	2
12.	Possession and Enjoyment Certificate	1	....	1
Total		32	13	19

**CLASSIFICATION OF REMARKS REGARDING THE UNSATISFACTORY
BEHAVIOUR OF THE TALUK STAFF**

Type of behaviour	Percentage
1. Unnecessary delay	20.21
I. Inefficiency	9.03
3. Illegal Act	18.64
4. Discrimination	14.22
5. Misconduct	5.32
6. Discourtesy	17.26
7. Petty Bureaucracy	10.50
8. Others	4.82
Total	100

Behaviour of the Taluk office staff

Each visitor who was interviewed was asked the number of times he had met the officer concerned during the past two months. On the basis of these visits, and the visit at the time of study, each visitor was asked whether the officer concerned was, in his opinion, easily accessible to any one who wanted to meet him.

We also tried to find out how the system of grievance-redressal was functioning and what was the response of the citizens to such an innovation. Since public relations and the behaviour of officer are interconnected, study of the same was conducted by personal interviews with the visitors. The views of the visitors on the behaviour of the Taluk office staff was as follows:-

(1) Satisfied	21.62%
(2) Dissatisfied	58.17%
(3) No opinion	20.21%

The 20.21% who refused to answer, appear to be afraid of the officials. They feel that their frank opinion about the behaviour of the officials may adversely affect them.

21.62% mentioned that they are satisfied about the behaviour of the officials. When we analysed the data we found there are factors which induced them to say this opinion. They are:-

- (1) They get undue help from officials through nepotism.
- (2) They do not mention the ways in which the officials are influenced-through bribing or political influence.
- (3) Very often the financially well-to-do citizens can deal with the officials.

The survey also proved that the citizens were put to a lot of botheration and inconvenience in the process of obtaining many things from the Taluk Office. Due to these inconveniences the public looks to the Taluk office as a symbol of delay, corruption, misconduct etc. The table reveals the behaviour of the Taluk staff.

Of all the problems having a bearing on redress of citizens' grievances, the most significant and pernicious problem seem to be that of delay. Delay and public relations are reciprocally connected. The ordinary citizen rushes to the Taluk office with his special problem. But the poor citizens have to wait for days to get their problems solved. Delays may some times be unavoidable. There are certain cases which cannot be solved within the four walls of the office. The cases under this category demand more and further enquiries which may be carried out through the Village officer or by the Taluk staff. For example, Income Certificates, possession and enjoyment certificate, Legal Heir Certificate etc., could only be given after an adequate enquiry through the concerned village staff. In some cases an enquiry by the Revenue Inspector is also inevitable. The average citizen may not understand these formalities and may blame the officials.

The survey also proved that heavy work had some times resulted in unnecessary delay in solving the problem of the public. As a result of this heavy work-load the Taluk staff become frustrated and this naturally leads to unnecessary delay.

Apart from delays caused by the administrative structure there are intentional delays for which only the officials are to be blamed. Intentional delays are primarily prompted by two factors. Firstly, some arrogant officials, experience inner satisfaction when citizens orbit around them to get their grievances redressed. Secondly, the delays can and do result in a variety of material and non-material gains. The survey proved that partiality and favouritism allowed in the discharge of official duties create unnecessary delays in solving the problems of the people. Well-dressed, educated, politically important persons or those who can bribe the officials get preference in getting a certain service from the Taluk office over a person who is less educated and less articulate. Narrating their experiences from frequent visits to the offices, the citizens dwelt at length upon the inordinate delays in getting things done. They felt that these delays were often resorted to by the Taluk staff to harass the public and to extort bribes,

The survey also focussed attention on a number of cases where monetary gain was the tempting factor to commit delay. The prevalence of corruption seems to haunt the minds of the bulk of the public. On the basis of his dealings with Taluk office employees, one citizen pithily remarked: "Money is the uppermost thing when they talk with the people". To trace an incident, another visitor whom we interviewed from that office premises, narrated a story of a corrupt official who was in the office for some time "A citizen applied for an income certificate in that office. Naturally it should only be given after an "adequate" enquiry by the Revenue Inspector. As usual, the Revenue Inspector demanded bribe from that man whose profession is hair dressing. But he was unable to give bribe. So the Inspector asked him to come to his house on the next day. On that day the officer mobilized some children from some whereelse and collected money from them to dress their hair. When he "barber" came he told him to dress their hair. After dressing these children's and the officer's hair the petitioner was able to get the certificate "very easily" These types of corrupt officials are a danger to the society and a challenge to the progress of public relation in administration. We also found the public extremely eager to charge the officials who were corrupt though they were reticent about specifying their personal experiences.

Discourtesy

Eighty percent of the public have rejected the idea that the officials are courteous and considerate towards the public. If a citizen is treated with courtesy and his requirements are attended to promptly, he will be satisfied. If he is pushed around from one place to another, treated shabbily and has to pay speed-money in order to get things done, he cannot be blamed if he is alienated from the system. Discourtesy is the most criticised part of the behaviour of the Taluk bureaucracy. 17.26% expressed the view that the main drawback in the attitude of the office staff was their discourtesy towards the public. Discourtesy may be shown in the form of non-attention, unhelpful attitude or harsh words. There is a belief among the

public that only influential persons can expect good treatment from the office staff. Rough answers like "go and enquire somewhere else", "I am not the concerned officer" etc., from these officials also strengthened this belief among the under privileged citizens. Rough and curt treatment even to those citizens who, either innocently or deliberately, make a nuisance of themselves, is not justified in a democratic society.

An administrator, wherever he may be working, whether he is old type administrator or the new type, has to create an atmosphere of understanding and appreciation in the eyes of the public and win their co-operation. But it will be found from the above analysis that administrators were not able to form a healthy relation. People could only tolerate this discourtesy because lodging a complaint may bring only further complications and difficulties.

Illegal Act

It is found that 18.64% of the dissatisfied citizens believed that several officials were either corrupt or open to political and other pulls and pressures which would result in illegal acts. The citizens also felt that their dealings with officials were unsatisfactory particularly in respect of access to officials and in processing their complaints. One of the visitors from a Taluk office frankly remarked that he had given a bribe to the office staff to get illegal assistance from them. This was done through a peon of that office. However, he refused to reveal the name of office staff due to the fear that it would adversely affect him. When we observed the office procedure in another Taluk office, we were able to find out that the public hesitates to face the Tahsildar. Instead, they are trying to get their problems solved through the back door. The result is that they are facing unnecessary delay.

Discrimination

There were also complaints of unfair treatment. Against these ills in administration, the citizens charge them with

discrimination. In this case rural and illiterate citizens are least critical, but they are, at the same time, doubtful about the efficiency of citizen action. In the urban areas, however, particularly among the educated class, people criticise more on the discriminatory activities of the administrator. Discrimination starts with favouring influential and well-to-do classes of the society and neglecting equal opportunities to the poor. The survey proved that this was a common phenomenon in other Taluks also. As a result of this discrimination the average citizen becomes frustrated and becomes hostile to the taluk staff. The hostility of the citizen towards the Taluk office and consequently to the whole system could be illustrated by the following typical comment, 'Let us scrap it altogether'. "An average person hates to visit the office because he wastes his time and achieves very little"

The views of Taluk office staff regarding Public Relations in the Taluk level.

Public relations in Administration may be considered as the two sides of the same coin—one, the bureaucracy and other the citizens. If the first is frustrated they may criticise the latter and the latter the former. Thus unnecessary allegations and counter allegations is a part of public relations. Thus to get a clear picture of the prevailing relations we have recorded the allegations and counter allegations of the public as well as the office staff.

Answering a question about the little co-operation they are receiving from the public, 52% of the officials mentioned about the general indifference of the public. A detailed analysis of the co-operation they are receiving is classified in the statement. As an answer to the question, "why is the public image about the taluk office and its staff not so good"? 62% of the staff expressed the view that "whenever there is dealing with the public there is always criticism". Thus, we found that most of them are trying to keep aloof from the problems of the public. In some cases they have to behave as an executive wing of the Government to fix the price of lands or for recovery of Government dues and it is a fact that if a person could not agree with the actions of the office staff it is quite common that he will make allegations.

EXTENT OF PUBLIC CO-OPERATION

Response	Percentage
Very little co-operation	45.55%
To a great extent	24.15%
Some extent	27.30%
Don't know	3.00%
Total.	100 00

The officials are often said to be callous and indifferent in serving the public. There may be an element of truth in this. But this does not warrant the wholesale condemnation of the officials of being insensitive to public needs. As a matter of fact, the administrators have to function within a frame work of rules and regulations. This often makes them extremely cautious. The public fails to appreciate this fact and is consequently impatient with the delays and the ways of administration.

Among the officials interviewed 46% accepted that political influences and pressures from top of the hierarchy create confusion and thereby unnecessary delay. As one Tahsildar pointed out, there would be a series of directions from the upper strata of the hierarchy which is humanly impossible to carry out. This ultimately results in frustration and confusion among the staff which may accelerate the stresses and strains in the relations.

Lack of adequate staff and office facilities are another excuse given by a Tahsildar. 45% of the offices are lacking adequate staff and this leads to delay.

62% of the Taluk Office staff stated that low morale is due to a number of factors. The first among them is the salary. As a justification for receiving bribe one of the office staff pointed out that the salary of the officials is low and they have to take bribing. "Dissatisfaction has engulfed both Taluk bureaucracy and the public", the result of which is the absence of adequate public relations.

Towards better Public Relations.....!

As the base unit of the Revenue Department, Taluk offices have a vital role to play in administration and thus the staff should be as good as it could be.

It is theoretically true that the 'administration in India serves the poor, the illiterate rural masses. But the officers in

most cases are from the middle class. These officers may be educated in cities and they may lack awareness of rural life. The only way out to solve this problem is to give the officers pre-entry training for creating this outlook. They should also be trained in public relations.

There should be a receptionist in each taluk office whom the visitors can contact. He should be able to guide the visitors and give them all information required by them. Persons well trained in public relations and with very good knowledge of the working of the department should be posted as receptionists.

Effectiveness in administration depends on many factors. The officers should have always the vision and outlook to invite the public to co-operate in their work. However, this survey proved that public participation in day-to-day administration is inevitably necessary for an effective functioning of the taluk offices. In this connection the public should also be more educated about the functioning of the taluk office which may be carried out through mass media of communications. The Public Relations department should take action in this matter. Issue of pamphlets, press releases etc. can be considered.

It is in a later period of their service that ordinary clerks in the taluk office can expect a good post. This really creates a lot of trouble in the system. This is one of the main reasons for corruption. When they are about to retire from service, the only consideration is to make money that could lead to a comfortable life, after their retirement. There should be more chances of promotion on the basis of merit.

The heavy work-load also creates uneasiness among the taluk bureaucracy. These officers are overburdened from the line agency. There should be a scientific assessment of workload and staffing pattern.

The physical conveniences and surroundings of the offices are psychologically linked with public relations. There is urgent need to improve the conveniences and office facilities.

